

Park East Redevelopment Plan Passes Council Unanimously

Plan will guide a projected \$250 million in development in Milwaukee's downtown

The Common Council unanimously passed the Park East redevelopment plan on Tuesday, June 15, 2004.



The removal of the Park East Freeway opened approximately 26 acres for redevelopment. It is expected that the redevelopment of this corridor will yield more than \$250 million in new development. The redevelopment plan identifies desired uses and development standards that will guide future development of the north side of Downtown.

Of the 26 acres available for redevelopment, Milwaukee County owns 16 acres, the City of Milwaukee owns less than one acre, and the remaining 10 acres are privately owned.

The Planning Process

The decision to remove the Park East Freeway and create a plan for the area's redevelopment had its origins in the Milwaukee Downtown Plan, adopted by the Milwaukee Common Council in October 1999. The Downtown Plan identified freeway demolition and redevelopment as a catalytic project, intended to generate new business opportunities and jobs, enhance residential appeal, enhance the appeal of downtown convention facilities, and grow the property tax base. The Park East redevelopment plan adopted in June was created with input from downtown stakeholders, business owners, neighborhood organizations, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, and City and County officials. Numerous planning sessions were held and one-on-one meetings took place with stakeholders to follow up and incorporate input that was made at the planning sessions. Public open houses were also held to gather input from the greater public and incorporate these ideas in the final plan.

Next Steps

The adoption of the redevelopment plan sets the stage for additional actions required to turn vacant property into a mixed-use district.

- The Knapp Street Bridge (shown at right) will be completed by early fall of 2004.
- The Milwaukee Common Council will be asked to rezone the property as recommended by the plan.
- The City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County will continue to work together develop a land disposition strategy. Steps include land surveying, appraisal, replatting, and designing a process for land sales.



- The tax incremental district now in place will be amended to fully fund infrastructure development costs required to prepare land for redevelopment.

Elements of the Plan

The plan envisions a mix of uses throughout the Park East Corridor, including residential, office, retail and entertainment. The plan also encourages the extension of the RiverWalk along the Milwaukee River. The plan is organized into three districts with distinct uses and design standards.

- **McKinley Avenue:** This district will be a new gateway into downtown from I-43 and Fond du Lac Avenue at the Hillside Interchange. The new boulevard provides high visibility and large contiguous parcels that are conducive to corporate buildings and entertainment venues. Infill residential and mixed-use buildings are also envisioned.
- **Lower Water Street:** Lower Water Street will promote mixed activity development that compliments the existing pattern of entertainment uses, high pedestrian activity, intense riverfront uses and linkages to surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Upper Water Street:** This district will continue the strong pattern of residential development that has flourished on the eastside of the corridor. It will create a unique, high-value, downtown residential neighborhood that includes a new public square (approximately 1 acre in size) and an array of uses such as live-work units, supporting retail and entertainment activities.
- The redevelopment plan controls building heights generally in a range from 4 and 10 stories. Buildings heights on Old World Third Street and Water Street are controlled to be sensitive to the scale of buildings that currently exist. High-rise buildings up to 20 stories will be permitted at key locations.

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